DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 965 EA 008 742

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TITLE An Evaluation of the Community School Program Using Goal Attainment Scaling.
INSTITUTION Eugene School District 4J, Oreg. Div. of Research, Development, and Evaluation.
PUB DATE 11 Jun 76
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Schools; Evaluation Criteria; *Evaluation Methods; Objectives; *Program Evaluation; *School Community Programs
IDENTIFIERS Eugene Oregon School District 4J; *Goal Attainment Scaling

ABSTRACT

This report describes a trial of an evaluation plan for community school programs that was based on the Goal Attainment Scaling system developed by Kiresuk and Sherman. The author briefly discusses the goal attainment scaling process and then examines the advantages and disadvantages of that approach for evaluating community school programs. The results obtained by using the system to evaluate six community school programs in Eugene (Oregon) School District 4J are presented. Based on these results, the author then offers her conclusions and recommendations regarding the use of the goal attainment scaling approach for evaluating community school programs. (JG)

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ED128965

EUGENE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School District 4J, Lane County
Eugene, Oregon

An Evaluation of the Community School Program

Using Goal Attainment Scaling

June 11, 1976

Submitted to: The Community School Advisory Board

Prepared by: Research, Development and Evaluation Division
Rose Hesse, Intern

EA 008 742

On February 11, 1976, the Community School Advisory Council authorized an evaluation plan based upon the Goal Attainment Scaling system developed and described by Kiresuk and Sherman.[1] This scale was initially developed for use in evaluating outcomes of treatment for individuals partaking in mental health programs. It has not been applied to community school programs prior to this time. In the February 11, 1976, meeting, advantages and disadvantages were presented to the board and a trial evaluation was begun to assist the board in determining the feasibility of the approach for future evaluations. This report describes the results of this trial evaluation.

The goal attainment scaling process involves four major steps. The first step is for the programs to set goals and/or objectives for the school year. Once the goals have been set and agreed upon, the programs should specify the expected outcomes for each goal and/or objective. The outcomes are categorized in terms of those thought most unfavorable through those thought most favorable. The criteria by which these decisions will be made should also be specified at this point. The third step translates these outcomes into scaled values on a scale of -2 for the most unfavorable through +2 for the most favorable. The final step involves evaluating the program on how successfully it met its specified outcomes. Appendix A presents an example of the end result of this process for one objective.

Advantages and disadvantages of goal attainment scaling:

There are several advantages of the goal attainment scaling approach for evaluating the community school program. Any number of goals can be used.

This allows for flexibility and thus a small number to a very large number of goals can be evaluated. The number of goals from program to program do not have to be equal. Thus, a program with a few goals can be legitimately compared to a program with many goals. The goals do not have to be parallel. Programs with vastly dissimilar goals and focuses can be compared on the basis of how well they have accomplished their individual program goals. The goal attainment process is flexible enough to allow goals to be added as time passes. This especially seems to lend itself to the often flexible and changing nature of community school programs. If desired, differing weights can be given to different goals. Thus, goals which have been given more effort and emphasis during the year can be given commensurate weight.

There are three possible disadvantages of using this approach in evaluating the community school program. The first is that the approach only reflects the actual goals and objectives of a working program, and their degree of attainment. It <u>does not</u> give information on whether or not the goals and objectives were actually appropriate for that particular neighborhood and community school. Such extrapolations are not appropriate within these data. It should be recognized that questions of the appropriateness of goals and objectives should be approached with other sorts of data than can be provided by this approach. The second possible disadvantage is that honesty in setting expected outcomes is necessary. In other words, the process can be manipulated to make a particular program appear to be more successful than is actually the case. The third possible disadvantage is that goal attainment scaling has not been applied to the community education field before and its appropriateness has not yet been determined.

Results

In the fall of 1975 each community school program set goals and objectives. A listing of these can be found in a report entitled "Neighborhood Activities by School Attendance Zones" prepared by Research, Development and Evaluation, School District 4J, December 10, 1975. During the spring of 1976, each community school program examined its goals and objectives and assigned outcome and scale values to each goal and/or objective. On June 1, 1976, each program had evaluated its goals and objectives and assigned scores for each goal.

Personnel in the Research, Development and Evaluation department then converted this information into standard scores utilizing the following formula:

$$T = 50 + \frac{10\ \Sigma w_i x_i}{\sqrt{(1-\rho)\Sigma w_i^2 + \rho(\Sigma w_i)^2}}$$

All scaled values (x_1) were assigned equal weights (w_1) in this analysis. The value of p, the expected intercorrelation among goal scores was assumed to be p = .3.[2] The standard scores by community school program are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Community School Program	Standard Score
Coburg	--
Dunn	--
Edison/Eastside	49.55
Laurel Hill/Glenwood	56.40
Lincoln	60.48
Patterson	57.06
Whiteaker	64.46
Willagillespie	59.04

The mean of the scores was 57.83. The mean of standard score is statistically set by the formula used and should be a value of 50.00. Five of six schools (of eight) fell above the standard score mean of 50.00 and three of six schools fell above the actual mean of 57.83.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

For the 1975-76 school year the recorded perceptions of the community school programs was that they had met their goals in an above-average manner. The number of objectives evaluated ranged from a low of four per program to a high of 48 per program. The actual goals and objectives were dissimilar both in subject and in criteria by which they were evaluated. In terms of the flexibility allowed by goal attainment scaling process, it seems to be a feasible instrument for use in the evaluation of community school programs.

The mean of the standard scores actually obtained by the community schools was higher than that which would be expected from the formula. This may be an artifact of the manner in which the process was used during the 1975-76 school year. The goals and objectives of the community programs were set during the fall of 1975 and the process of goal attainment scaling was not begun until the spring of 1976. Thus the criteria for evaluation were sometimes set after the goals had been completed. Ideally, the process should be used in such a manner that the outcome values and criteria should be set at the same time that the goal is set, and then the goal evaluated upon its completion. The fact that this sequence was not possible to follow in some instances may have resulted in some measure of inflation in the standard scores. A major recommendation is that the procedure for using the goal attainment scaling process should be standardized with the programs assigning

expected outcome values at the time of goal setting.

The criteria on which each goal was evaluated were not specified in all programs. It would be difficult for an impartial observer to determine how these scores were arrived at. Programs need to better specify and document these criteria upon which their scores are based. This also should be done at the time of goal setting.

Another ambiguity in the data involved the specification of whom was involved in arriving at the final goal attainment scores for each goal. It is our assumption that the community school councils had input. In the future, a more valid and impartial approach may be to have each member of the program independently score each goal on the criteria agreed upon in advance and have the data pooled by an independent source.

This report is based upon data provided by the community school program and was compiled upon data received by June 11, 1976.

[1] Kiresuk, Thomas J., and Sherman, Robert E. "Goal Attainment Scaling: A General Method for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Mental Health Programs." *Community Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 4 (6), 1968

[2] Ibid. p. 449

APPENDIX A	GOAL # 1 Set up personal meetings or coffees to talk with community people.
Worst Possible Outcome -2	No meetings or coffees. No input from community.
Less Than Expected Outcome -1	Coffees and meetings are set up but receive no input by May. Receive negative responses to the meetings.
Expected Outcome 0	Set up meetings and coffees by March. Meet once a month with community people. Have several people attend regular. Receive comments and input from people attending. Increased conversation between CS and the community. Awareness of the need for community commitment begins.
Greater Than Expected Outcome +1	Set up meetings and coffees by February. Large number of people (15) attend one meeting. Conversation between CS and community is ongoing.
Best Possible Outcome +2	A nucleus group of people meet regularly to discuss the community school. Goals are set for the program Nucleus group follows through with those goals.

SCORE 0